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HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION 99
By Mumpower

A RESOLUTION to honor the memory of Dale Earnhardt and his accomplishments at Bristol Motor Speedway.

WHEREAS, the members of this General Assembly were greatly saddened to learn of the death of Dale Earnhardt; and

WHEREAS, Mr. Earnhardt was a tremendous champion and a superb role model for the people of Tennessee; his accomplishments as a driver will long hold an exalted position in NASCAR history, and those impressive exploits which were realized at the Bristol Motor Speedway ensure Mr. Earnhardt a place in the history of Tennessee; and

WHEREAS, from the early years of his career, Dale Earnhardt thrilled the racing fans who congregated at Bristol to enjoy Winston Cup competition; on April 1, 1979, Bristol Motor Speedway was the setting for the dawn of "the Intimidator," as he triumphed in the Southeastern 500, an accomplishment that would be a key factor in his successful candidacy for Winston Cup Rookie of the Year; and

WHEREAS, in the years that followed, Mr. Earnhardt made many memories at the Bristol track, both for himself and for the racing fans; he was victorious in nine Winston Cup

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races on the track, an accomplishment surpassed only by Tennessean Darrell Waltrip's eleven wins; Mr. Earnhardt also added a victory in the 1988 Busch Series Budweiser 200; and

WHEREAS, in 1980, a victory at the Valleydale Southeastern 500 at Bristol helped propel Dale Earnhardt to a Winston Cup Series Championship, the first of seven; his Bristol wins in 1987 and 1994 also boosted championship drives; and

WHEREAS, in both 1985 and 1987, the seven-time Winston Cup champion swept the Valleydale and Busch 500s; during his storied 1987 season, he won the night race at Bristol while suffering from the flu; at that race's conclusion, he could not even muster the strength to shut off his engine in victory lane, yet he had utilized his vast reserves of stalwart determination to emerge victorious; and

WHEREAS, Bristol racing fans vividly remember the 1995 race in which Dale Earnhardt staged a tremendous rally during the final lap, nearly overtaking Terry Labonte before being edged out for the victory as Labonte spun across the finish line; in storybook fashion, "the Intimidator" avenged his 1995 loss in the 1999 night race, as he again chased down Labonte on the final lap and succeeded in overtaking the Ford stock car to claim victory for the number three Chevrolet; and

WHEREAS, the "World's Fastest Half Mile" was the venue where the Earnhardt legend was born, and it is where much of that fabled story was developed over the course of two exhilarating decades of racing; the track gave much to Earnhardt, but he gave even more back to Bristol and its fans; and

WHEREAS, on the night of February 20, 2001, racing fans flocked to Bristol Motor Speedway's Victory Lane, a location once frequented by Mr. Earnhardt's black Chevrolet, to mourn the loss of NASCAR's greatest driver; they came from many towns and diverse backgrounds, united solely by their common admiration of a man who provided them with much shared joy and many lasting reminiscences; and

WHEREAS, Dale Earnhardt has completed his final lap at the Bristol Motor Speedway, but his story remains; as is the case with all true legends, his memory will flourish in the hearts and lore of the Bristol faithful as it is passed from one generation to the other; and

WHEREAS, it is fitting that this General Assembly should pause to remember the bountiful life and unparalleled career of this exceptional athlete; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE ONE HUNDRED SECOND GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF TENNESSEE, THE SENATE CONCURRING, That we honor the memory of Dale Earnhardt, reflecting fondly on his indelible legacy as a champion and join with the fans at the Bristol Motor Speedway in expressing our appreciation and admiration for his many estimable contributions to racing.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That we express our sympathy and offer our condolences to the family of Mr. Earnhardt.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That an appropriate copy of this resolution be prepared for presentation with this final clause omitted from such copy.